United Nations E/CN.6/2006/10–E/CN.4/2006/60

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
20 December 2005

Original: English

Commission on the Status of Women
Fiftieth session
27 February-10 March 2006
Item 3 (a) of the provisional agenda*
Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace in the twenty-first century": review of gender mainstreaming in entities of the United Nations system

Commission on Human Rights
Sixty-second session
13 March-21 April 2006
Item 12 (a) of the provisional agenda**
Integration of the human rights of women and a gender perspective: violence against women

Report of the United Nations Development Fund for Women on the elimination of violence against women

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit herewith to the Commission on the Status of Women and the Commission on Human Rights the report of the United Nations Development Fund for Women on the activities of the Fund to eliminate violence against women, which was prepared in compliance with General Assembly resolution 50/166 of 22 December 1995.

* E/CN.6/2006/1.
** E/CN.4/2006/1.

05-65702 (E) 110106

Report of the United Nations Development Fund for Women on the elimination of violence against women

1. In its resolution 50/166 of 22 December 1995, the General Assembly gave the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) the mandate to strengthen its activities to eliminate violence against women in order to accelerate the implementation of the recommendations set out in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.[1] In doing so, UNIFEM works closely with the relevant organizations and bodies of the United Nations system as part of system-wide efforts to eliminate violence against women.

2. The present report to the Commission on the Status of Women at its fiftieth session and the Commission on Human Rights at its sixty-second session documents the activities undertaken by UNIFEM in 2005 to eliminate violence against women.

United Nations Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women

3. Under the guidance of General Assembly resolution 50/166, the United Nations Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women was established in 1996, with UNIFEM as the Fund's administrator, and became operational in 1997. That resolution positioned the Trust Fund as a key mechanism with respect to the advance action to address violence against women as set out in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Since its inception, the Trust Fund has continued to identify and support innovative and catalytic initiatives around the world that aim to break new ground, create new models and mobilize new constituencies in the growing movement to eliminate violence against women in all of its manifestations.

4. Through the Trust Fund, UNIFEM links innovative efforts to end violence against women with opportunities to replicate and scale up successful strategies. The Trust Fund generates lessons and good practices that inform larger programmes of the United Nations and its civil society and governmental partners at the national, regional and global levels.

5. A revised Trust Fund strategy for the period 2005-2008, approved by the Inter-Agency Project Appraisal Committee in 2004, began implementation in 2005. The revised strategy introduced changes built on lessons learned from the first eight years of the Trust Fund's operation — including in the areas of impact, involvement, knowledge, efficiency and resources. Under the revised strategy, Trust Fund decision-making is devolved to the subregional level, and focuses on enhancing and supporting the vast array of laws and policies that have been created in all regions of the world to address the multiple forms of violence faced by women.

6. Since its inception, the Trust Fund has instituted a number of measures to facilitate the involvement of a wide range of stakeholders. In the 2005-2008 phase of the Trust Fund, further efforts are being undertaken to expand the involvement of United Nations organizations and other key actors. In particular, the Trust Fund is facilitating greater participation in the call for proposals in the field and at headquarters, in vetting proposals, in pooling resources to support proposal efforts,

and in convening grantees regionally together with United Nations organizations to support mutual learning, stronger partnerships, replication and upscaling.

2005 Trust Fund grant making cycle

7. In November 2005, the tenth grant making cycle of the Trust Fund provided US$ 1.8 million to 24 initiatives in 30 countries. Despite a doubling of the Trust Fund's resources in 2005, demand for Trust Fund support far exceeded its resources, and the Trust Fund was able to fund only 24 of the more than 1,000 grant proposals received.

8. Proposals were submitted for final review to 12 subregional Inter-Agency Project Appraisal Committees, meetings of which were held in Ecuador, Mexico, Brazil, Barbados, Senegal, Nigeria, Kenya, South Africa, Nepal, Thailand, Fiji and Slovakia. In the subregional Appraisal Committees, members of the United Nations system met together with national experts on violence against women to determine grant allocations. United Nations organization members of the 2005 Appraisal Committee included representatives of the International Labour Organization (ILO), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT), the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), the World Food Programme (WFP) and the World Health Organization (WHO).

9. Trust Fund grant making focused on two areas. First, support was provided for the implementation of laws, policies and plans to combat violence against women. Additionally, submissions were invited for innovative approaches to addressing the interlinkages between HIV/AIDS and violence against women. The Global Coalition on Women and AIDS, of which UNIFEM is a member, has identified violence against women as a priority area of action to reduce women's vulnerability to HIV and improve their access to HIV and AIDS services. In the 2005 cycle, 10 Trust Fund grants support projects that increase action and knowledge about the linkages between domestic violence and HIV/AIDS, and about the violence that prevents women from seeking HIV information and health services. Grants through the Trust Fund will stimulate action on the ground as well as expand the evidence base and feed into advocacy.

10. Fourteen projects to support the implementation of laws, policies and plans of action have been funded under the 2005 Trust Fund cycle in Mali, Nigeria, Swaziland, the United Republic of Tanzania, Bhutan, Cambodia, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Tajikistan, Brazil, Colombia, Dominica and the Dominican Republic. Among these initiatives:

- In the United Republic of Tanzania, the implementation of the law prohibiting trafficking for sexual exploitation and forced labour will be supported through educational initiatives to help young people know what their rights are and understand how to recognize fraudulent job recruitment promises.

- In Cambodia, the development of government strategies to ensure effective implementation of the new domestic violence law will be supported through a public awareness campaign and the training of volunteers to provide legal aid and counselling.

- In the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, new provisions on domestic violence have been introduced into the criminal and family codes. Support will be provided to translate the new laws into effective and consistent practices nationwide, by forging a partnership with key government agencies and networks of service providers, and through outreach to the public.

- In Brazil, support will be provided to improve black women's access to new legal protections. A Network of Black Women against Violence will be organized to advocate for women's rights in the Metropolitan Region of Rio de Janeiro and to study the impact of violence against black women.

- In Dominica, a coordinated multisectoral approach to implementing domestic violence laws will be supported. The Dominica Women's Bureau and the National Council of Women will bring together government representatives, judiciary, police, men's organizations, legal aid and other civil society actors to raise public awareness, improve services and review resources in support of existing laws to ensure that they have the required funding.

11. Projects addressing the linkages between violence against women and HIV/AIDS have been funded under the 2005 Trust Fund cycle in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, South Africa, Uganda, India, Viet Nam, Nepal, Samoa, Haiti, Mexico and Peru. Among these initiatives:

- In South Africa, an arts-based project will focus on the role of gender-based violence in the transmission of HIV, using participatory art forms such as community theatre workshops to involve audiences, increase public awareness and encourage public action.

- In India, support will be provided to counter stigma, and promote the rights of women living with HIV/AIDS to access health-care, medical and legal services and to own property, aiming particularly at reducing discrimination and violence within the families of women living with the disease.

- In Haiti, HIV/AIDS education will be incorporated into support groups and forums for survivors of rape. The project will also support the development of community-based committees to organize around the issue of HIV/AIDS and its link to violence.

- In Mexico, an assessment will be conducted of young rural women's perceptions of gender-based violence and HIV/AIDS in the state of Chiapas, to identify sociocultural attitudes that could increase women's vulnerability to contracting HIV/AIDS. The information will be provided to local health and education authorities and community groups and used to design culturally appropriate intervention strategies.

12. Resources for the Trust Fund doubled in 2005 to $1.8 million from $900,000 in the previous year. In addition to continuing support from the Government of Finland, increased resources were made possible through a first-time contribution by the United States of America. A first-time contribution from a private sector partner, Johnson & Johnson (global manufacturer and provider of health-care

products and services), specifically focused on supporting programmes linking HIV/AIDS and violence against women. Zonta International, a non-governmental organization, was another first-time contributor and the UNIFEM National Committees have also increased their contribution. The decentralizing of the Trust Fund programme approval process to regional Project Appraisal Committees resulted in small additional investments from United Nations partners. Additionally, regional and national replications of the Trust Fund are contributing to a larger resource base. In 2005, efforts began to launch a regional Trust Fund to end violence against women; and a national Trust Fund, created in partnership with private sector partners, is being launched in Brazil. A continued increase in Trust Fund contributions is urgently required to enable the Trust Fund to support the considerable number of worthwhile proposals that are submitted annually.

UNIFEM programming under the 2004-2007 multi-year funding framework

13. In addition to administering the Trust Fund, UNIFEM identifies and supports innovative and catalytic strategies to end violence against women in its programming and partnerships. Four outcome-level results are pursued in end-violence programming under the UNIFEM 2004-2007 multi-year funding framework, whereby: (a) legislation and policies are formulated and implemented to promote and protect women's human right to be free from violence; (b) mainstream institutions demonstrate the leadership, commitment, technical capacity and accountability needed to address violence against women; (c) gender equality advocates have the knowledge and are positioned to spearhead and transform policies, programmes and resource allocations so as to end violence against women; and (d) there is a change from harmful and discriminatory attitudes and practices that perpetuate violence against women. Specific areas of focus for UNIFEM programming vary according to the regional context, with, for example, heightened attention to the issue of trafficking of women in the South Asian region, and to the intersection of violence against women and HIV/AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa.

14. In its programming to strengthen laws and policies, UNIFEM has been supporting efforts to introduce, retain or strengthen domestic violence legislation in the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Fiji, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mexico, Mongolia, Nepal, the Philippines, Tajikistan, Thailand and Zimbabwe; to strengthen the policy response to femicide in Mexico, Central America and the Andean region; and to support the criminalization of gender-based violence in Sierra Leone and sexual violence in Peru. A regional programme to reduce trafficking in women and children in South Asia supported Governments and non-governmental organization partners in a review of laws related to trafficking, as well as policies and practices of the criminal justice systems and institutional mechanisms in different countries. Draft amendments to existing legislation were proposed in Nepal and a revised bill tabled in the lower house of parliament. UNIFEM has also worked within the United Nations system to advocate for a consistently applied policy to address violence against women in post-conflict needs assessments and responses to crises.

15. Where efforts to reform law and policy are at a preliminary stage, UNIFEM support focuses on reviews, assessments and consensus-building. UNIFEM assistance to the Coalition against Sexual Harassment in Barbados will inform the

law reform process in that country and across the Caribbean, with advocates planning to renew calls for a stronger legal framework. In Chile, UNIFEM worked with regional women's human rights networks and HABITAT to bring a gender perspective to "Chile + Seguro", a national programme designed to increase urban security. In Sierra Leone, UNIFEM supported the Law Reform Commission's undertaking of a comprehensive review of the existing legal framework as part of its work on criminalizing gender-based violence.

16. In its programming to strengthen mainstream institutional responses to violence against women, UNIFEM works to build the capacity of duty-bearers to fulfil their obligations to promote and protect women's human rights, with a focus on the judiciary, law enforcement, parliamentarians, ministries of health and foreign affairs, departments of statistics and United Nations partners. In Rwanda, for example, capacity gaps have been hampering the ability to respond to violence against women, and the need for a coordinated strategy was identified. UNIFEM responded by providing support for: (a) the alignment of all actions to combat violence against women with the national action plan; (b) the establishment of a gender desk at the national police headquarters; (c) the training of law enforcement and community leaders on means to ensure that women's human rights are respected in responses to violence against women; and (d) the collaboration between parliamentarians and civil society to ensure that legal reform measures in the area of violence against women respect their human rights entitlements.

17. Responses to the pandemic of violence against women are hampered by a lack of accurate data and statistics about its scope and prevalence. UNIFEM is supporting efforts to improve the generation and use of data in Afghanistan, Egypt, India, Jordan, Mexico, Saint Lucia, the Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand and Zimbabwe. In Thailand, UNIFEM participated in the National Subcommittee on the Elimination of Violence against Women which has advocated for creating software that would allow police, crisis centres and non-governmental organizations to make data available online. The Government of Thailand has indicated its willingness to allocate funds to support this ambitious project. In Zimbabwe, the Central Statistical Office has agreed to collect sex-disaggregated data on domestic violence. UNIFEM, UNFPA and the Musasa Project developed a module on domestic violence that will be used by the Office during the Demographic and Health Survey. UNIFEM will also be working with UNDP and UNFPA to support national partners in the undertaking of a national survey on violence against women.

18. Although incidents of violence against women have reached epidemic proportions in many of today's war zones, a systematic, coherent framework for inter-agency action to support prevention and response is still lacking. United Nations bodies and non-governmental organizations have come together to brainstorm on ways to develop a global initiative to end rape in war. The initiative will address the issue of rape committed by combatants as well as by community leaders, service providers and peacekeepers. UNIFEM is coordinating the advocacy component of this global initiative which recognizes that rape not only spurs cycles of violence, but also blocks women's effective participation in reconstruction and post-conflict peacebuilding. Plans are under way to carry out a campaign to end rape in conflict situations with the aim of enhancing prevention and security and implementing strategies to protect women and improve access to legal redress.

19. At the regional level, UNIFEM advocacy has included the Latin American campaign "For the Health of Women, for the Health of the World: No More Violence!". Among the campaign's partners are PAHO, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNDP and United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), as well as the Center for Women's Global Leadership, the Inter-American Commission of Women, the Inter-American Parliamentary Group on Population and Development, and the Inter-American Alliance for the Prevention of Gender-based Violence from a Health Perspective. In 2005 the Latin American campaign, as part of the global 16 days of activism against violence against women, focused on the connection between violence against women and women's vulnerability to HIV/AIDS.

20. UNIFEM programming to strengthen the capacity of gender equality advocates to spearhead approaches to ending violence has drawn on the example of the Trust Fund. In Central Asia, the regional replication by UNIFEM of the Trust Fund in 2004 has built capacity and broader partnerships among numerous women's organizations, which continued to support progress in 2005. In Kazakhstan, the Union of Crisis Centres established close working relationships with the special unit on protection of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. In Uzbekistan, the non-governmental organization Ikbol launched a strategy for raising awareness about gender-based violence among soldiers, which resulted in the inclusion of its training module in the capacity-building plan of the Ministry of Defence.

21. Finally, in 2005, UNIFEM and the World Bank entered into a partnership to develop an evaluation methodology designed to assess the impact of community-based anti-violence initiatives. One of the key recommendations of a 2004 workshop held by the World Bank on the development implications of violence against women had been that further evidence should be provided on the effectiveness of interventions. UNIFEM has also identified the need to conduct further evaluations of projects supported by the Trust Fund so as to draw lessons therefrom on which approaches are most effective in addressing violence against women. UNIFEM and the World Bank are working together to develop and field-test an evaluation methodology with projects selected from the Trust Fund. The methodology and its findings will be documented and disseminated for use in future initiatives to combat violence against women.

Conclusion

22. Violence against women is the most pervasive violation of human rights, occurring every day, in every country and every region, regardless of income or level of development. The release of the Secretary-General's study on violence against women in 2006 will offer an important opportunity to provide guidance to Governments, the United Nations system and the broader community on steps forward in addressing the issue. In 2004 and 2005, UNIFEM has been participating actively in the study, in particular to ensure that it benefits from the experiences of the Trust Fund and the lessons learned therefrom.

23. States Members of the United Nations have repeatedly recognized the need to eliminate violence against women, through resolutions of the General Assembly, including resolution 50/166 under whose guidance the Trust Fund was created. Most recently, at the 2005 World Summit, Heads of State and Government reaffirmed

their commitment to eliminating discrimination and violence against women, underlining that progress for women is essential to achieving all internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. To achieve this aim, it is critically important that the existing level of support provided to combating violence against women is significantly increased and that effective, innovative approaches are replicated on a larger scale.

Notes

[1] *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap, I, resolution 1, annexes I and II.